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MEN WITH IDEAS: HEGEL

IT is odd," remarks Bertrand Russell in his *History of Modern Philosophy*, "that a process which is represented as cosmic should all have taken place on our planet, and most of it near the Mediterranean." Mr. Russell is speaking of the system of George William Hegel, the last of the great German metaphysicians, and this comment is one of his more tolerant references to Hegel. Hegel was a man with extraordinary first principles, but his application of them, his short-sighted attempt to show their embodiments in the particular facts of human experience, has made him the most unpopular philosopher of modern times. It is natural, therefore, that Mr. Russell, who is practically without first principles—who can tell us about more things which he does not believe, and more about why he does not believe them, than any other living logician—should find little to admire in Hegel's work. Why does he, or anyone, trouble to discuss Hegel at all? Probably because of the German thinker's enormous influence, and because, as Mr. Russell explains: "Even if (as I myself believe) almost all Hegel's doctrines are false, he still retains an importance which is not merely historical, as the best representative of a certain kind of philosophy which, in others, is less coherent and less comprehensive." Hegel, in short, made his mistakes on a grander scale than lesser men.

Two inquiries about Hegel seem worth pursuing. First, why was Hegel's influence so great? Second, granting some of Mr. Russell's sharpest criticisms—and Russell's criticisms are an adequate representation of what nearly all the other critics of Hegel are saying—has the modern world really repudiated Hegel's conclusions, or has it only pretended to do so, by objecting to the way in which he reached them?

For Hegel, the absolute or ultimate Reality is the whole vast sweep of Becoming, in both matter and mind. He will have nothing to do with stationary, untouchable abstractions of the spirit. He is primarily a philosopher of mind, of comprehension; he sees the universe as a dramatic spectacle, manifesting the unfolding spirit of life and consciousness. Logic, for him, is the same as metaphysics. The rational is the real, and the fulfillment of cosmic evolution is spirit becoming aware of itself, through periodic stages of self-realization.

Something great, something majestic and wonderful, is going on in the world, and whether men will it or no,

whether or not they are conscious participants, they are a dynamic part of this great process. In his *Philosophy of History*, Hegel wrote:

The History of the World begins with its general aim—the realization of the Idea of Spirit—only in implicit form (*an sich*) that is, as Nature; a hidden, most profoundly hidden, unconscious instinct; and the whole process of History . . . is directed to rendering this unconscious impulse a conscious one. Thus appearing in the form of merely natural existence, natural will—that which has been called the subjective side—physical craving, instinct, passion, private interest, as also opinion and subjective conception—spontaneously present themselves at the very commencement. This vast congeries of volitions, interests and activities, constitute the instruments and means of the World-Spirit for attaining its object; bringing it to consciousness and realizing it. And this aim is none other than finding itself—coming to itself—and contemplating itself in concrete actuality. But that those manifestations of vitality on the part of individuals and peoples, in which they seek and satisfy their own purposes, are, at the same time, the means and instruments of a higher and a broader purpose of which they know nothing—which they realize unconsciously—might be made a matter of question; rather has been questioned, and in every variety of form negated, decried and condemned as mere dreaming and "Philosophy." But on this point I announced my view at the very outset, and asserted our hypothesis . . . our belief that Reason governs the world, and has consequently governed its history. In relation to this independently universal and substantial existence—all else is subordinate, subservient to it, and the means for its development.

This is Hegel's grand announcement. He not only interprets the world but he tells the world. He is the self-conscious herald of the new dispensation of reason, and for us to succumb to the temptation to be amused at his unalloyed self-confidence, or even to jeer at him a little, would be easy, were it not for the extraordinary profundity of his thought and the dignity of his ideas.

Looking back on the early years of the nineteenth century, one may feel a little envious of the capacity of men like Hegel for positive enthusiasm. Today, our philosophers are mostly composing cultural epitaphs, but Hegel—Hegel set down a symphony of Reason becoming master of itself. As Windelband says, he was to the cycle of European Transcendentalism what Proclus was to the cycle of Platonic idealism. He is determined to show the relationship of the ideal to the concrete, and to do so systematically, by the employment of reason,

Letter from ENGLAND

LONDON.—President Truman's decision to proceed with the development of the hydrogen bomb has naturally evoked widespread comment here. In some quarters it has led to appeals that efforts should be made for conversations between heads of States to see if a *modus vivendi* can be reached whereby control (at least) of this and the atomic bomb may be secured, pending the arrival from somewhere of the millennium. This belief in the saving grace of Talks seems to be a variant of the theological dogma of the Atonement, but not even those who are loudest in the cry for conferences and more con-

bringing to rich fruition the similar but less complete strivings of all his predecessors.

Hegel was impatient with the "skepticism" of religion—the attitude, that is, which declares that the meaning of things must remain forever hidden from human view. The common belief in Providence, he says, shows hostility toward the idea that the Divine Plan can be comprehended by men.

In isolated cases this plan is supposed to be manifest. Pious persons are encouraged to recognize in particular circumstances, something more than mere chance; to acknowledge the guiding hand of God; *e.g.*, when help has unexpectedly come to an individual in great perplexity and need. But these instances of providential design are of a limited kind, and concern the accomplishment of nothing more than the desires of the individual in question. . . . Equally unsatisfactory is the merely abstract, undefined belief in a Providence, when that belief is not brought to bear upon the details of the process it conducts. On the contrary, our earnest endeavor must be directed to the recognition of the ways of Providence, the means it uses, and the historical phenomena in which it manifests itself; and we must show their connection with the general principle above mentioned.

Like any systematic thinker, Hegel starts out with definitions. What is spirit? His answer is essentially Platonic. It is *self-contained existence*. Plato called the soul a self-moving unit, in contrast with other things which are moved from without. Hegel makes the same contrast. Matter "has its essence out of itself"; it seeks its unity elsewhere than in itself, being attracted by gravity from without; while spirit "has not a unity outside itself, but has already found it; it exists *in* and *with* itself."

Now this is Freedom, exactly. For if I am dependent, my being is referred to something else which I am not; I cannot exist independently of something external. I am free, on the contrary, when my existence depends upon myself. This self-contained existence of Spirit is none other than self-consciousness—consciousness of one's own being. Two things must be distinguished in consciousness; first, the fact *that I know*; secondly, *what I know*. In self-consciousness these are merged in one; for Spirit *knows* itself. It involves an appreciation of its own nature, as also an energy enabling it to realize itself; to make itself

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ferences believe that, as things are, it is possible to conceive of a warless society.

Is there anything to suggest that the atmosphere of unreality, distrust, and acrimonious accusation that has characterized the debates of the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission since June, 1946, can be removed by change of venue or personnel? The truth is that there is no common language for discussion (important words such as "democracy" or "peace" are differently interpreted). Nor is there an accepted conception of man as anything more than the product of heredity and environment. And it is too often forgotten by those who are impressed by the destructive potential of high explosive weapons that not even the most vigorous international control could prevent secret bacteriological work from being carried out in small innocuous-seeming laboratories to obtain sufficient highly concentrated solutions of, for example, psittacosis-producing virus to infect and kill whole populations.

"Modern history," Lord Acton remarked, "tells how the last 400 years have modified the medieval conditions of life and thought." The great historian did not live to see how history, since his death in 1908, has completely obliterated anything that can be recognized as pre-twentieth century. Yet, certain historical realities remain even in the midst of the triumph of a naturalistic science of society, and, with R. H. Tawney, we see here and there a growing awareness of the fact that "societies, like individuals, have their moral crises and their spiritual revolutions." In such a crisis and revolution we live today, and the agitation over new methods of devastation is but a phase of the collapse of our mental machinery, which has vainly tried to construct a new hypothesis of life upon the basis of an amoral scientific technique.

An instance may be recorded here of the growing disintegration of values. *The Times* referred a little while ago to Mr. Atlee's reply to English Quakers, in which he said that the Russian plan for the control of atomic weapons would not only fail to produce the security required, but would be dangerous because it might delude the peoples of the world into thinking that atomic energy was being controlled, when, in fact, it was not. It then went on to say: "Whether a hydrogen bomb is morally worse than an atomic bomb or an atomic bomb than a high-explosive bomb is a difficult question to answer." This refinement of ethical values in relation to degrees of destructiveness is surely the very negation of any true idealism: it is the fruit of that pseudo-scientific thought which views any convictions as ultimately founded on non-rational complexes. A good deal of mental rubbish, masquerading sometimes as idealism, will have to be cleared away before we can hope to arrive at the principles which might resolve the moral crisis of our world. There is greater truth, perhaps, in the further remark of the same issue of *The Times* (Feb. 2, 1950): "There is nothing in the history of the world to justify the assumption that men are the best judges of their own interests." But, do they even know "their own interests" in any sense of more than passing significance? We have not even begun to ask that question!

—ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL CONFUSION

MISS ERIKA MANN, daughter of Thomas Mann, recently addressed the Hollywood Town Meeting on the subject, "Can Man Find Peace and Purpose in the Atomic Age?"—a subject which, in her development, immediately and inevitably transformed itself into, "How Can We do Something to Surmount the Obstacles to Peace?" This theme was noticeably organic to Miss Mann's maintained position as a semi-pacifist anti-Nazi. She spoke convincingly about the vicious circle into which America is being drawn through fears of further Russian expansion. The present policy, according to Miss Mann and others who ought to know, is to restore Western Germany to centralized power as quickly as possible by utilizing the practical political experience of former Nazis. We want Germany as a relatively strong buffer-ally against Russia; yet it should be clear that we shall never be able to trust an ally held together by power-barons, and that the success of such a venture will simply complicate our fears without reducing them.

Miss Mann's immediate plea was for thinking men and women to recognize an important distinction between Nazism and Communism. She outlined the original intent and objective of Communist thought, separating them, for the moment, from the admittedly inhuman methods adopted by the Soviet State. The Communist ideology draws at least partial inspiration from a concern for the improvement of the lot of the common man. For theoretical evidence of this, Miss Mann cited the Soviet Constitution, a noble and fully democratic document. The Nazi ideology, on the other hand, she maintained, contained not a single thread of connection with the democratic ideal. Miss Mann's warm support of the McMahon plan follows logically from this viewpoint, especially since it is always easier to hate and fear depersonalized collectivities, such as "the Russians," when we never hear what they say directly—or even know what they look like in situations divorced from coercive tensions. (For a long time, whatever we get of the Russians in newsreels has been restricted to scenes of the latter.)

While one may applaud Miss Mann's claim that it is *not* hopeless to envision working out a basis for European economic recovery in conjunction with Russia, her argument seems vulnerable on one important point: She rests her hope on the still recognizable *ideological* similarities between the American and Russian ways of life. This means that, for the man who, now or later, can find no common ideological ground at all with the Russians, the only recourse is defensive, coercive, or punitive action—exactly the attitude which she implies must be maintained against any vestigial proponents of Nazism. A broader view would perhaps be one which proceeds from the assumption that *all* ideologies have *some* roots in common—even the most perverted still reflecting the

influence of some social or human truth of which it is a perversion.

On such a view, we should not be driven to excommunicate the devotee of any ideology from the Society of Human Beings. A recognition of some partial truth contained, however distortedly, in his outlook could provide that margin of understanding which is always so much better than hate and fear. Miss Mann and a few others are reminding us that the present Soviet ideology is but a distortion of Socialism, and that Socialism can easily be as democratic or more so than Capitalism. The Nazi ideology, it could be said, removed itself two steps further: the Nazis corrupted not only the Socialist principle, but also the Aristocratic and the Individualist principles.

But if one gains from Miss Mann the impression that the Nazis are truly inhuman, even if the Russians are not, we can be glad that her own original status as a "German" is mute evidence of the fact that persons of Teutonic extraction are not all offsprings of Heinrich Himmler. The whole Mann family has been a reminder that there are no such things as corrupt races or nations, no matter how many political delusions must exist *among* a people to usher in the incredible tyrannies of Fascist control.

We should like to see Miss Mann given opportunity to convince a great many Americans that they have much more to worry about in their Fear of Communism than in the presence of the "pitiful few" who still retain some actual form of Communist affiliation in this country. Also, to regard Russian Communism as a perfectly integrated force, efficiently working toward global domination, is absurd. The Soviets are pressed by internal problems of gigantic scope, while even the Chinese Communists act in a manner virtually independent of Moscow directives.

The reaction of the Hollywood audience to Miss Mann was as interesting as her talk, though much less encouraging. Its only instruction to the observer lay in the fact that it was undoubtedly typical. For instance, Miss Mann's first questioners were principally concerned with whether or not our State Department is making a mistake in "appeasing" the Russians. Miss Mann laughed at that one, it being apparent that not only is she unable to note any such policy—ours is rather one of consistent belligerence—but also that she believes that intelligent conciliation and arbitration are precisely what is most needed. It is always debilitating to be pessimistic, but it is impossible not to wonder how large a proportion of those attending such lectures are doing anything more than refurbishing their objections, their dislikes, or their deliciously fascinating fears.

Miss Mann, once an actress, charmingly told a story

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FORMS OF SECURITY

MANY men, with their families, would like to break out of the stultifying routines which have grown up around their lives, yet fear the loss of material security. The individual of unconventional habits and activities sometimes finds it difficult to "fit in" to the prevailing ways of making a living. Employers often prefer men with not only limited personal ambition, but also with lack of imagination, for such men are the most submissive, and least likely to disturb the established way of doing things.

In all such problems, however, it seems important to recognize that the security gained from choosing the line of least cultural resistance is merely an alliance with timidity, which can last no longer than the institutions which the general timidity and conformity support. The only real security lies in the habitual exercise of the creative faculties—in the development, that is, of the endless adaptability which is the birthright of every human being. Cultural rigidities are marks of cultural decline, and the more demanding of conformity a society becomes, the less security, actually, can it make available to the conformers.

MANAS has a large and varied correspondence with non-conformists. One thing we notice about this correspondence is that few if any of those who write are much concerned about their material security, although none, so far as we know, could be called "rich." Rather, they seem to have discovered, with Plato, that "poverty consists, not in the decrease of one's possessions, but in the increase of one's greed," and as "possessions" obviously play only a small part in these people's lives, the seeming lack of security does not impress them very much.

Even from a "practical" point of view, there is mutual support among those who live by non-acquisitive standards and pursue ends which have nothing to do with material possessions. There *is* enough to go 'round, and when people who believe this learn to know and to share one another's hopes and ideals, the other forms of sharing proceed almost as a matter of course.

Their real security, however, is not in the necessities and comforts which are shared, but seems to be in the spirit of interdependence which upholds all those who work for the common good, and in the realization that a security which must be fought for, worried about, or made the object of crusading zeal, is not worth its asking price.

REVIEW—(Continued)

which should increase sympathy for the millions of Europeans who are caught in almost hopeless political confusions. It went something like this:

A Hungarian diplomat presented himself before the President of a South American Republic, apparently seeking support in a war just declared against the Soviet Government. The President failed to observe on the application the signature of the King, Hungary being known as a kingdom. Questioned about this, the diplomat replied:

"Well, you see, we don't quite have a King, at present. Our country is headed by an Admiral, whose signature you find in *place* of the King's."

"Oh, I must have been inadequately informed. How large a Navy do you have, by the way?"

"Well, we don't exactly have a Navy, just now. Our outlets to the sea have been removed from us. That is why we are going to war with Russia."

"Russia annexed your corridor to the sea?"

"Oh no, Rumania did that."

"But why aren't you going to war with Rumania, then?"

"Oh, we couldn't possibly do that! Rumania is our ally."

"So your troops are on the Soviet border, following your declaration of war?"

"Oh no; not at all. They are in Norway preserving order."

"Take him away," the President shouted. "The man's crazy."

However apocryphal this story, it must be representative of the montage of changing boundaries and alliances which have so obscured the opportunities of Europeans to integrate politics with the ethics of daily living—so that the ascension of perverse elements to power is made easy. We should perhaps remind ourselves, too, of the probability that men and women of philosophical maturity will some day emerge in Russia—and who will speak to us of the need for understanding the horrible machinations of some other country, just as Germany's Miss Mann speaks to us today.

MANAS is a journal of independent inquiry, concerned with study of the principles which move world society on its present course, and with search for contrasting principles—that may be capable of supporting intelligent idealism under the conditions of life in the twentieth century. MANAS is concerned, therefore, with philosophy and with practical psychology, in as direct and simple a manner as its editors and contributors can write. The word "MANAS" comes from a common root suggesting "man" or "the thinker." Editorial articles are unsigned, since MANAS wishes to present ideas and viewpoints, not personalities.

The Publishers

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

OUR readers have been favored with considerable discussion of the merits of cooperative work-relationships for children, both in this column's version of some basic requirements for an "ideal school," and by courtesy of quotations from the general ideas of certain educators. But partly because so much of this material has been theoretical rather than factual, it should be worthwhile to make use of some "case-histories."

The *Woman's Home Companion* for August, 1949, described the activities of the children of the Hessian Hills School in New York, who are running a successful cooperative store under a charter from the National Consumers' Cooperative. As a picture caption relates, not only do eleven-year-olds have fun with the store, but "they are also learning finance, arithmetic, letter writing, and administration." This business-school type of experience, however, is not the primary aim. The Hessian Hills enterprise, like the educational experiments of other "Cooperators," is intended to create a better sense of social responsibility. The children are *participating* in the interdependent processes of economy, rather than memorizing descriptions of how these processes are supposed to work.

Two sections from the constitution of the Pine Mountain Settlement School in Kentucky will further indicate the economic orientation cooperators think desirable:

Section II—To get the best quality of goods for the price.

Section IV—Whereas the capitalist system exists merely to make profit in dollars and cents, the co-operative system gives the people the best quality of goods for the money and the profits go back to the consumers in rebate.

The Pine Mountain School has a sizable going concern in its Co-op. By "co-operating" in everything from the determination of their curriculum to an international study of cultures and economics, the students endeavor to pioneer a way of designing patterns of community living superior to those of capitalist competition. Incidentally, the story of Co-op trust-busting in Sweden means something to the Pine Mountain students, because of their own Co-op experience, besides giving excellent perspective on contemporary politics and economics.

A good account of the unique educational values emerging at Pine Mountain is given in *Education for American Democracy*, by James Mursell of Teachers College, Columbia (Norton, New York). Mr. Mursell includes and approves a short note from one of the Pine Mountain group, following it with some words of his own—words which indicate that at least one Teachers College progressive, despite use of phrases such as "experience curriculum," has not lost sight of the fact that these are but verbal symbols for ways to improve the organic vitality of school life. The following is from the note from Pine Mountain:

Such terms as *core course* and *experience curriculum* have not found their way into these hills of Harlan County.

The director of the school and his staff are too busy with the natural activities of the hundred youth and the mountain community from which they came to classify the curriculum, or even to designate it.

Mr. Mursell comments:

In other words, we have here yet another group of professional workers tackling their own problems directly and seeking fresh solutions. Pine Mountain is a boarding school where people come for from one to four years to learn how to live. It has no grade classifications. It gives no marks. The University of Kentucky accepts its graduates, but only a minority go on to college. This obviously means that it has extreme freedom to do what it considers best.

One other interesting experiment is given particular mention by Mursell. Wells High School, in Chicago, has done a thorough job of reorganizing the school curriculum:

Students were invited to the teachers' meetings to give testimony, and six student-planning groups were organized and brought into orderly relationship with the enterprise. The curriculum was reorganized. It was set up about six "functions of living": human relationships, economic consciousness, thought and its communication, health, leisure, work, and spiritual and ethical character. Every effort was made to bring the materials used and the topics considered closely into relationship with the immediate problems of the boys and girls of the neighborhood, although, of course, without restricting them to any such narrow immediacy. Subject matter ordinarily organized under the conventional categories was brought, so far as was relevant, into the new scheme, in the belief that this would help to render it vital and significant. Thus English teaching centered about recreational reading, the use of good English at home, and so forth. Mathematics was studied in its applications to the personal and domestic budget, community expenditures, and the like.

Secondly, teaching procedures were fundamentally revised. Classrooms were transformed into workshops, and individual and group study was substituted for the conventional recitation. Each room was supplied with a permanent stock of books. Most of the work in maintaining the institution is done by the students. This includes the farm, the dairy, the kitchen, the laundry, the light plant and waterworks, care of the buildings and equipment, and housework. Traditional subjects, such as English, mathematics, and history are studied when and as they may be related to the student's needs and to the development of his personality and character. Material for the course in civics has been specially prepared and written up so that it may be related intimately to the local scene. The operation of a staff-owned Consumers' Co-operative Store is carried on by a new group each year as a regular school course, into which mathematics, science, economics, English, hygiene, and history are tied. Experience and activity in connection with the student-government plan are related to the study of social and civic problems. In the same way the cultural implications of farm experiences, the health program, and recreational activities are developed. Both students and staff give much direct service to the community, and this, too, is a center for expanding insights and the building up of skills and knowledge.

In such schools we certainly find a reproduction of the valuable participatory educational opportunities once afforded by small rural communities before the main surge of urbanization. But the pioneers of the new school ventures described above have done more than resurrect some of the opportunities of the past; many extra values come from the necessarily *fully conscious* determination of opportunities in the face of present social obstacles.



FRONTIERS

RELIGION SCIENCE EDUCATION

An Anarchist Proposal

A COLORFUL phase of the influence of the world-government movement is reported in *Common Cause* (a University of Chicago publication devoted to world government) for April. Not willing, apparently, to wait for the rest of the world to join in, the people of Revel, France, President Auriol's home town, recently declared Revel to be "a world territory," informing the President that he "had automatically become a world citizen." M. Auriol replied with the hope that the home communities of other national leaders would follow this example. Already, *Common Cause* reports, some two hundred French communities have made similar declarations, and in Germany the resort town of Koenigswinter was the first German town to "worldize" itself.

People in the United States probably do not realize the extraordinary interest of Europeans in the idea of world government. In Paris, Garry Davis, now known as World Citizen Number One, has addressed audiences of many thousands, and he has a large following in Germany as well. (It would probably be more accurate to say that the ideal that Davis stands for has the following, and not Davis himself, although his personal simplicity must have helped to focus the longings of a vast multitude of war-weary people.) The temper of many Europeans on this subject is perhaps illustrated by a paragraph from *Common Cause*:

A Paris lawyer, Henri Marçais, has written to Edouard Herriot, president of the National Assembly, asking him for authorization to speak before the Assembly on the subject of "The Atomic Threat and World Government"; he has asked that a debate on the subject follow his remarks in the Assembly. His letter reads in part: "What I ask is undoubtedly unconstitutional, but it is a question now of whether we prefer to die constitutionally, or live unconstitutionally."

These "unofficial" gestures may not seem to count for much, in terms of concrete political action for peace, but as evidences of an increasingly popular attitude of mind, they may signify a ground swell of conviction that will in the end replace entirely the partisanship and insecurities of nationalism. When enough people have freed themselves from the emotional grip of the national idea, the reorganization of the world along federalist lines should meet no insuperable obstacle. Writing on this general problem in the *Nation* for April 8, John Boyd Orr, world authority on agricultural resources, calls attention to the basic requirement of all effective peace-making:

In the last resort, the decision of peace or war lies with the people. Even in totalitarian countries the leader must justify his actions in the eyes of the people. If a world plebiscite were taken, there would be ten thousand votes for world unity and peace to one for war. The people are getting together in international organizations—the United

World Federalists, the Crusade for World Government, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the International Friendship League, the Students' International Federalist Movement, the Committee to Prepare a World Citizen Movement, and many others. . . .

If this people's movement continues to grow as it has grown in the last few years, and delegates from all countries meet in conference, a great contribution will be made to an international spirit of friendship and every movement for peace will be strengthened. Peace-loving governments will feel that in working for world unity they have the support not only of their own peoples but of many millions in other countries.

If the peoples of the world with one united voice demand world unity and peace they will get it. . . .

No one can quarrel with Lord Orr's main contention—that the decision of war "lies with the people." It is easier, in fact, to agree with this statement than with the idea that "peace-loving governments" will feel themselves assisted by a grass-roots movement for peace. A peace-loving government is a government which does not make war, but the modern governments which call themselves "peace-loving" have waged more and greater wars than many of the governments of other centuries which claimed no such honorific title. More to the point seems Lord Orr's observation about a world plebiscite on war and peace, amounting to the implicit suggestion that, were it not for governments, the people of the world would have peace.

Why don't the "peace-loving governments" he refers to set up the machinery for a plebiscite on war and peace—in their own countries, at least? Is it because "the people," whether in democracies or in totalitarian lands, cannot be trusted to recognize the necessity for war, when it appears? A parity of reasoning would suggest, on behalf of the plebiscite idea, that governments cannot be trusted to recognize the necessity for peace.

On the surface, the proposal to decide for peace or for war by a national referendum seems a simple and obvious application of the democratic principle. It is the people who must fight, who must deny themselves, who must die or lose their loved ones, and who, with their descendants, must pay for the war. Why shouldn't so momentous a decision be put to popular vote?

Actually, no more far-reaching reform in the theory and practice of modern government could be suggested. The best-laid plans of military strategists would be in danger of a rude discard by the mere emotionalism of mothers and fathers who have given no "real" thought to the national destiny. How can they understand the larger interests of the country, when they think only of the suffering that war brings? What of the national economy, increasingly organized for the preparation of war? It is not that the planners of our "preparedness" program really want a war—but after all, if you were

MEN WITH IDEAS: HEGEL

(Continued)

actually that which it is *potentially*. According to this abstract definition it may be said of Universal History, that it is the exhibition of Spirit in the process of working out the knowledge of that which it is potentially. And as the germ bears in itself the whole nature of the tree, and the taste and form of its fruits, so do the first traces of Spirit virtually contain the whole of that history.

Now we come to the first of those illustrations of his theory which have made Hegel so unpopular a philosopher. After claiming that the Orientals knew nothing of the fact of human freedom—were not their governments despotic?—and that the Greeks and Romans, who practiced slavery, had only a partial notion of freedom, he affirms, as a good German Lutheran, that: "The German nations, under the influence of Christianity, were the first to attain the consciousness that man is free: that it is the freedom of the Spirit which constitutes its essence."

Hegel the historian is as provincial, as time-bound and space-bound, as Hegel the metaphysician is catholic and universal. In consequence, an age like our own, which has no interest in metaphysics, can find nothing but fault with what he says—in fact, Hegel's rendering of history

an engineer or an administrator who had spent the best years of your life working out the most efficient techniques for winning any possible future war, how would *you* feel if you knew that, at any time, the people might rise in a body and call the whole thing off?

Governments which could make war only by popular plebiscite would be governments virtually without the power to make war at all, so that the proposal for a plebiscite is really an anarchist idea. This is a curiously revealing sequence—that the application of a simple democratic principle to the exercise of power, the power to make war, should turn out to be absolutely subversive in its implications; subversive, that is, to the Power State. It might not be subversive to another sort of democratic government.

Is there really any other way for the world to find peace? If, as Lord Orr says, the peoples of the world want peace, a thousand to one, and if the statesmen and the scientists and the political commentators think that there is only one chance in a thousand to get it, why shouldn't the solution be clear: that the people must take the power from the statesmen and the scientists and the political commentators?

But "the people," of course, is only a figment, when it comes to the exercise of power. There is no power without authority, and no authority without human recognition of its existence. Before they can have power, the people must have authority, and before they can get authority, they must accept the responsibilities which the possession of authority always requires. This is the simple equation that Gandhi tried to put to work—with some success—in India. Elsewhere, as yet, it is still only a dawning idea, although one that is taking root. Popular discussion of Lord Orr's suggestion of a world plebiscite on war might help to prepare the soil.

in terms of his metaphysics of the Spirit has been a principal cause of the modern contempt for *all* philosophies of the Spirit.

In social analysis, Hegel's greatest offense is his virtual deification of the State. A stateless man, according to Hegel, is like a bee without a hive—a fragment, a particle, a useless and functionless nonentity. He is unequivocal on this:

In the history of the World, only those peoples can come under our notice which form a state. For it must be understood that this latter is the realization of Freedom, *i.e.*, of the absolute final aim, and that it exists for its own sake. It must further be understood that all the worth which the human being possesses—all spiritual reality, he possesses only through the State. For his spiritual reality consists in this, that his own essence—Reason—is objectively present to him, that it possesses objective immediate existence for him. Thus only is he fully conscious; thus only is he a partaker of morality—of a just and moral social and political life. For Truth is the Unity of the Universal and subjective Will; and the Universal is to be found in the State, in its laws, its universal and rational arrangements. The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth. We have in it, therefore, the object of History in a more definite shape than before; that in which Freedom obtains objectivity, and lives in the enjoyment of this objectivity of Spirit; volition in its true form. Only that will which obeys law, is free; for it obeys itself—it is independent and so free. When the State or our country constitutes a community of existence; when the subjective will of man submits to laws—the contradiction between Liberty and Necessity vanishes. The rational has necessary existence, as being the reality and substance of things, and we are free in recognizing it as law, and following it as the substance of our own being. The objective and the subjective will are then reconciled, and present one identical homogeneous whole.

Hegel, in short, pondered so well that he discovered the proper definition of *Nirvana*, but wanted so much to make his Absolute take part in the drama of human existence that he located *Nirvana* in northern Europe and tried to pour out its ineffable essence into the mold of German Protestantism and the Hohenzollern Constitutional Monarchy. A hundred years after Hegel's death, Max Eastman, in his famous critical essay on Soviet Russia, *Artists in Uniform*, put into words the basic objection to Hegel's application of his metaphysical scheme:

To identify theoretic knowledge of reality with a program or a struggle for power is a dangerous self-deception. To identify such knowledge with a program of bureaucratic boss-rule is a crime against society, science, art and education.

This is the charge that modern thinkers direct, or ought to direct, at Hegel, and the only defense that can be made for him against it is the excuse of political naïveté: How could he know, in advance, that the identification of the power of the State with a metaphysical theory of Right would eventually become a justification of the Moscow Trials, the Nazi Death Camps, and the amoral absolutism of single party rule?

Hegel lived at the time of the genesis of modern German nationalism. Born in Stuttgart in 1770, he was in the prime of his manhood when Napoleon inflicted his humiliating defeat on the Germans. It was a part of the spirit of the time that nationalism and idealism should

become almost indistinguishable, for Germans. A man, said Aristotle, must be part of a State unless he is either a beast or a god. Hegel, for all his philosophizing, was no god.

But to do Hegel justice, it should be recognized that he saw in the State the principle of synthesis for common human good. He made the State serve what seemed to him a philosophically necessary function—the impersonal reconciliation of human differences and the uniting of the wills of the many for the good of all. Every social philosopher must conceive *some* instrument to embody this principle, and if Hegel chose a bad one, what better principle have his critics to offer?

The most that Bertrand Russell can say is that Hegel should have proposed a World State—which leaves the synthesis still at the political level, although, in theory at least, it would abolish the necessity for war, as a World State would have no one to fight with. The real defect in Hegel's thinking, however, is doubtless his preoccupation with "wholes," to the detriment of the crucial units—the individual men—of which social unities are made. It is the supreme irony of modern intellectuality and modern history that Hegel, who regarded the State as the ultimate form of human freedom, should have been looted of his metaphysical scheme by the materialist Karl Marx, who then declared that, with the triumph of Communism, the State would "wither away"; and that, finally, the State which resulted from the rise to power of the Marxian socialists has turned out to be the practical opposite of all that Hegel claimed for his ideal State.

Let us take one last look at Hegel's philosophical justification of the State. The so-called "state of Nature," he says, has only the germs of freedom in it:

What we find such a state of Nature to be in actual experience, answers exactly to the Idea of a *merely* natural condition. Freedom as the *ideal* of that which is original and natural, does not exist as *original and natural*. Rather it must be first sought out and won; and that by an incalculable medial discipline of the intellectual and moral powers. The state of nature is, therefore, predominantly that of injustice and violence, of untamed natural impulses, of inhuman deeds and feelings. Limitation is certainly produced by Society and the State, but it is a limitation of the mere brute emotions and rude instincts; as also, in a more advanced stage of culture, of the premeditated self-will of caprice and passion. This kind of constraint is part of the instrumentality by which only, the consciousness of Freedom and the desire for its attainment, in its true—that is Rational and Ideal form—can be obtained. . . . We should . . . look upon such limitation as the indispensable proviso of emancipation. Society and the State are the very conditions in which freedom is realized.

Have we *really* outgrown Hegel? When Hegel talks

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about the limitation of "the mere brute emotions," he does not stress the policeman's club; he wants us to think—wants, indeed, to think himself—that by some super-political magic the restraining power of the State will somehow be transformed into the rational self-control of individuals. But the political enforcement of social order ends with bigger and better policemen, and bigger if not better prisons. And we, when we talk of defending the rights of free peoples by a show of overpowering military might—we like to think that a sky dark with bombers will somehow inspire the peoples of the world with a fervor for democracy. We do not exactly intend to say that the hydrogen bomb is the last best hope of America, yet the political *force majeure* of the hydrogen bomb is what we are really relying upon.

It seems a bit contemptible to sneer at Hegel's metaphysics, giving as a reason our liberal dislike of the Omnipotent State, and then to adopt for ourselves the practice, if not the theory, of the Omnipotent State, on the ground that the power of the State is the sole protection of our Liberal Virtue. Why not admit, instead, that there is nothing in the philosophy of the Spirit which compelled Hegel to identify the perfect realization of freedom with the political form of the State—that in this, Hegel was the child of his times—and that another conception of the realization of freedom of the spirit is open to all men?

What is that conception? How far we are even from imagining what it may be is evidenced by our behavior toward the impractical souls who, however imperfectly, have tried to propose that the sovereignty of the State be replaced by the sovereignty of man. Garry Davis, for example, was refused a civil marriage ceremony in Maine, recently, because he has declared himself a citizen of the world. The predicament of Davis recalls the situation of Iceland, during the days of the League of Nations, when that small country could not be recognized by the League as having any national existence at all. Why? Because Iceland had no army! A nation, apparently, according to the League definition, is something which has an army.

We are, it seems, pretty much where Hegel left us, so far as understanding the nature of freedom is concerned. We know only that he was wrong about the State, but we keep on practicing what he preached. This is more flattering to Hegel than to ourselves.

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